

North Bend Wind Project: Public Scoping Meeting

Western Area Power Administration (WAPA)
January 28, 2021

Welcome

This meeting is being recorded

- 6:30-6:45 Logistics and introductions
- 6:45-7:30 Presentations by WAPA and Developer
- 7:30-7:55 Question/answer and comment session
- 7:55-8:00 Meeting wrap-up and next steps

Project website:

www.wapa.gov/regions/UGP/Environment/Pages/NorthBendWind.aspx

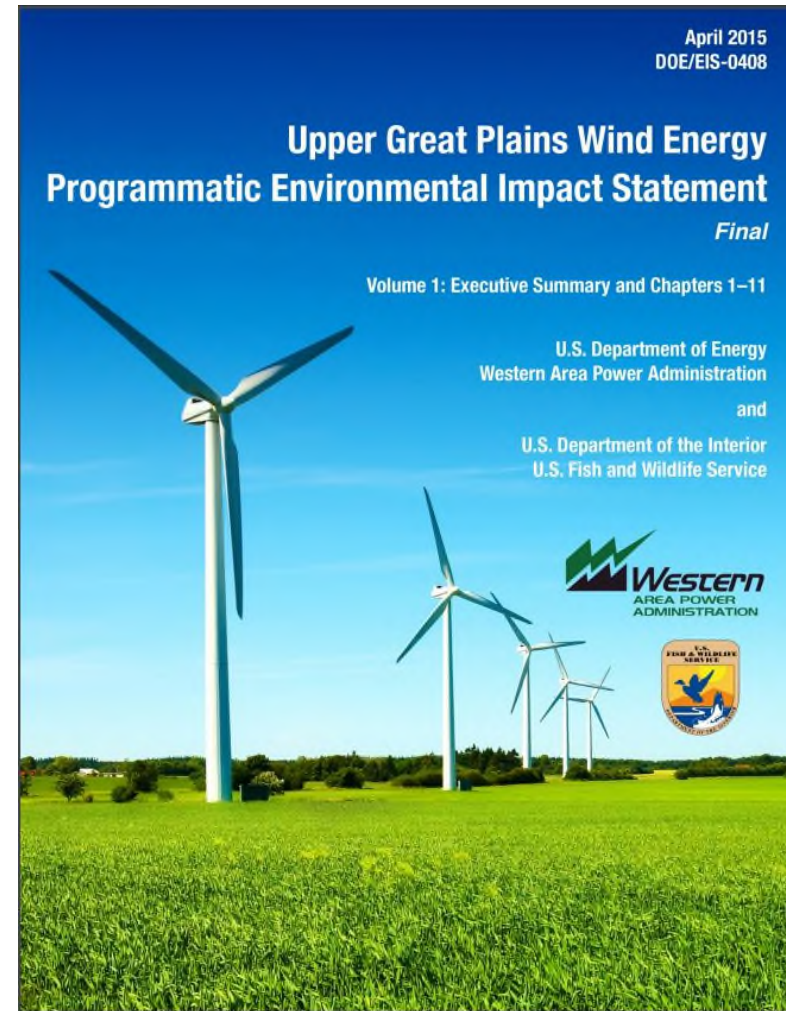
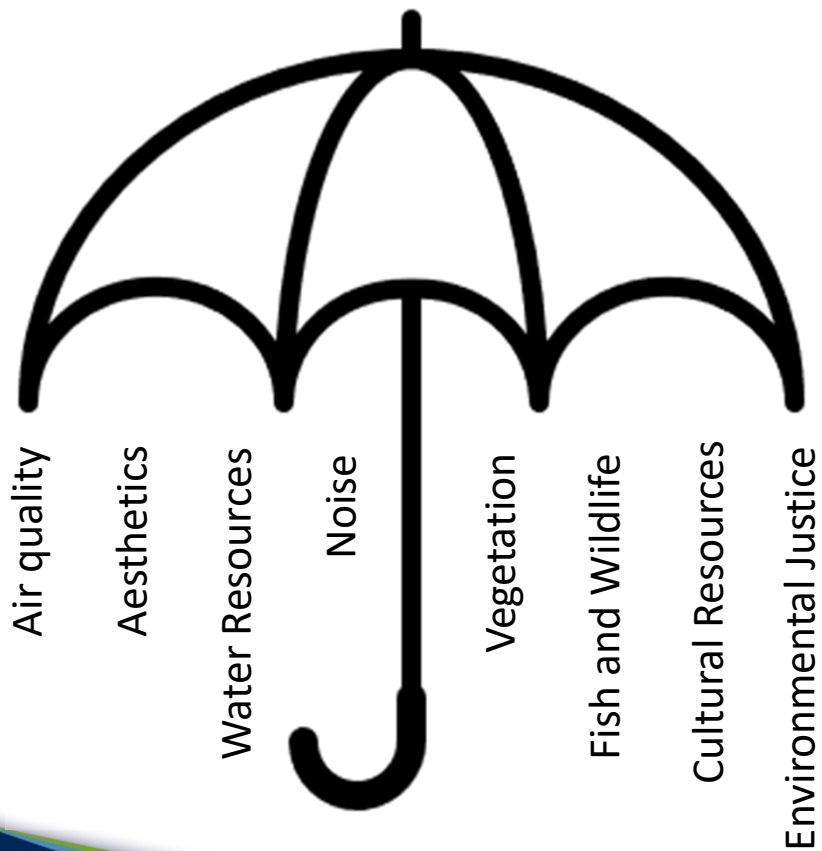
Introductions

- WAPA
 - Christina Gomer, NEPA Coordinator (gomer@wapa.gov)
 - Alyssa Fellow, Biologist (fellow@wapa.gov)
 - Dave Kluth, Archeologist (kluth@wapa.gov)
 - John Russell, Environmental Manager (jrussell@wapa.gov)
- North Bend
 - Casey Willis, Senior Advisor (casey.willis@engie.com)
- WEST
 - Elizabeth Lack, Project Manager (elack@west-inc.com)
 - Casi Lathan, Assistant Project Manager (clathan@west-inc.com)
 - Martin Piorkowski, Wildlife Biologist (mpiorkowski@west-inc.com)
- HDR
 - Gwen Jurisich, Communications Coordinator (gwen.jurisich@hrdinc.com)

Purpose: Why are we here?

- North Bend Wind Project, LLC (North Bend) is proposing to develop the North Bend Wind Project.
- North Bend has requested to interconnect the Project with WAPA's federal grid system at the Fort Thompson – Oahe 230 kV Line.
- WAPA's decision to grant or deny the interconnection request is a Federal Action, which triggers several environmental laws.

NEPA and You



Tiered Environmental Assessment Process

Scoping

- Introduce the project
- Receive preliminary feedback from interested parties (public, agencies, tribes)
- 30-day comment period

January-March 2021

Draft EA

- Describe the Project
- Describe any alternatives
- Characterize the resources
- Analyze impacts
- Respond to scoping comments
- 30-day comment period

June-July 2021

Final EA

- Respond to draft EA comments
- Revise EA, as necessary
- Determine whether EIS is necessary
 - If yes: move into EIS process
 - If no: prepare Finding of No Significant Impact and decide whether to grant or deny interconnection.
- Optional public comment

September-October 2021

Scoping

Purpose: Introduce the project; obtain input on any concerns or issues; help determine the range of alternatives; help determine the resources to be evaluated in the EA.

More helpful comments:	Less helpful comments:
Be specific: what are your concerns with the project?	Give a general thumbs-up or thumbs-down on the project
Are there alternatives that WAPA should be considering? State them.	Make statements like “protect the water!” or “vote no!”
Provide copies or links to any relevant sources or studies that you are aware of.	

How to Comment:

- Via the scoping meeting tonight
 - Verbal
 - Written in the chat box
- Telephone
(406) 255-2811 to speak with a WAPA representative
or
(605) 782-8199 to leave a voicemail.
- Email to
gomer@wapa.gov
- Mail to:
Western Area Power Administration
Attn: Ms. Christina Gomer
2900 4th Avenue North
Billings, MT 59101
- Comment form at
www.wapa.gov/regions/UGP/Environment/Pages/NorthBendWind.aspx

Postmarked by March 1, 2021



North Bend Wind Project

Hughes and Hyde County, South Dakota

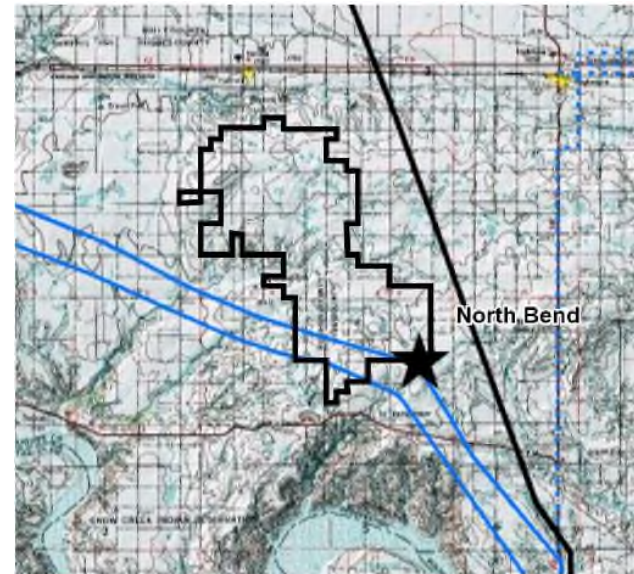
Casey Willis, Senior Advisor

January 2021

North Bend Wind Project

Overview

- Project was originated in 2015.
- Located on almost 40,000 acres of land under easement. Setbacks and siting constraints limit the number of acres that could be utilized.
- Approximately 75 landowner groups participating in the Project.
- To date, Engie has completed extensive wind resource evaluations, over three years of biological/environmental field studies, and finalized the interconnection studies.
- The turbine manufacturer or model has not been selected for the site at this time.
- Target Construction Start Date – Fall 2021
- Target Commercial Operation – End of 2022.





North Bend Wind Project

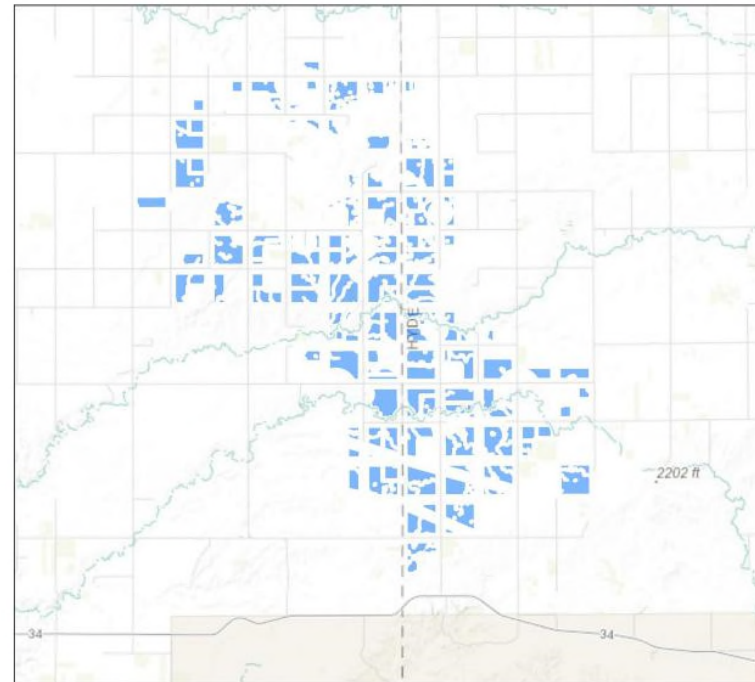
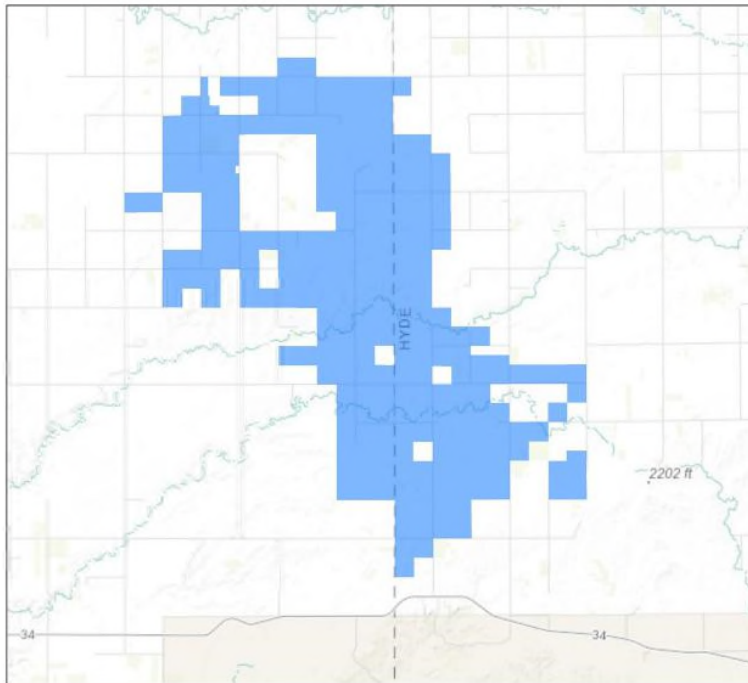
Project Components

- **Generation Capacity.** 200 megawatts (MW).
- **Proposed number of turbines.** Will likely utilize 2.8 to 5.7 MW wind turbines. 35-70 turbines will be used for the Project depending on the turbine model selected. Tentative turbine locations will be identified when the turbine model is selected.
- **Turbines Specs.** The largest turbine that is under consideration is a 5.7 MW machine. The tower height is 108 meters (354 feet) with a rotor of 163 meters (534 feet). Tip height = 622 feet.
- **Point of Interconnect (POI).** New POI on the existing Fort Thompson – Oahe 230 kV Line.
- **Overhead Transmission Line.** Approximately 4-5 miles of new 230 kV transmission will connect the project substation to the POI.
- **Underground Collection and Substation.** All of the wind turbines will be connected by underground 34.5 kV collection lines. Voltage is stepped up to 230 kV at the project substation.



North Bend Wind Project

Useable Turbine Area



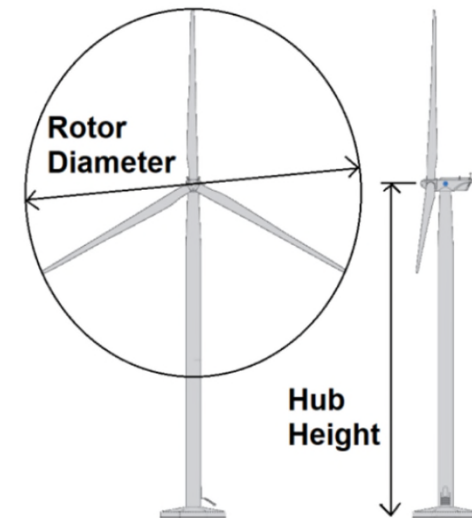
- All of the area under easement cannot necessarily be developed.
- Setbacks – Roads, property boundaries, environmental constraints (e.g., USFWS grassland easements, protected wetland basins), beam paths, houses, significantly reduce the area that could be considered.
- North Bend – Approximately 21.1% of the area under easement could be used for turbine siting

Project Components

- Proposed Wind Turbine – Will likely utilize 2.8 to 5.7 MW wind turbines. Turbine model has not been selected.
- Overhead Transmission Line – 230 kV monopole transmission line
- Project Substation – Voltage from underground collection is stepped up to 230 kV



Example Turbine Specifications		
	GE 2.82 MW	Nordex 5.7 MW
Nameplate Capacity	2.82 Megawatt	5.7 Megawatt
Hub Height	88.6 meters (290 ft)	108 meters (354 ft)
Rotor Diameter	127 meters (416 ft)	163 meters (534 ft)
Total Height	152 meters (499 ft)	189 meters (622 ft)



North Bend Wind Project

Project Economics

- Capital Investment - \$250 Million
- The Project would create approximately 6-8 full time positions during operation. O&M activities will likely be conducted jointly between Triple H and North Bend.
- During construction the Project would employ 400 people with up to 130 onsite at any one point.
- Project is projected to generate approximately \$954,000 annually in production taxes.
 - State – Approximately \$284,000 annually.
 - Counties – Approximately \$335,000 annually.
 - School Districts – Approximately \$335,000 annually.
- Stable and long term payment to the landowners directly participating in the project.
- Indirect benefits – Increased use of local services/suppliers, sales tax generation.





Thank You

Casey Willis, Senior Advisor
January 2021





Environmental Regulations and Studies

Elizabeth Lack and Martin Piorkowski

Our Role

WEST is an environmental consulting firm assisting with the environmental permitting process required for the North Bend Project. This includes:

- Collection, analysis, and reporting of biological survey data.
- Preparation of the Environmental Assessment (EA) as a third-party contractor.
- As the lead federal agency, WAPA is ultimately responsible for independently reviewing, analyzing, and judging all information in the EA.

Federal and State Environmental Regulations and Guidelines

- National Environmental Policy Act
- National Historic Preservation Act
- Clean Water Act
- US Endangered Species Act
- Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act
- South Dakota Codified Law § 34A-8
Endangered and Threatened Species
- South Dakota Codified Law § 41-11
Protection of Birds and Small Game
- USFWS Wind Energy Guidelines
- USFWS Eagle Conservation Plan Guidance
- Additional regulations may apply, including State Public Utilities Commission approval and/or County Planning and Zoning Board decisions.

Biological Surveys for North Bend Wind Project

Bird Surveys

Eagle/Large Bird Use and Small Bird Use Surveys

- Three years of surveys have been completed (2016-2017, 2018-2019, 2019-2020).
- Final year of surveys are in progress and survey work will be completed in March 2021.

Eagle and Raptor Nest Surveys

- Aerial and ground surveys were completed in 2016, 2018, 2019, and 2020.

Prairie Grouse Lek Surveys

- Aerial surveys were completed by fixed-wing aircraft in 2016 and 2018.
- Prairie grouse lek checks were completed in 2019 and 2020 to confirm activity and status.

Whooping Crane Habitat Assessment (Niemuth Model)

- Predicted whooping crane habitat use was assessed within the Project and a 10-mi buffer.

Biological Surveys for North Bend Wind Project

Bat Surveys

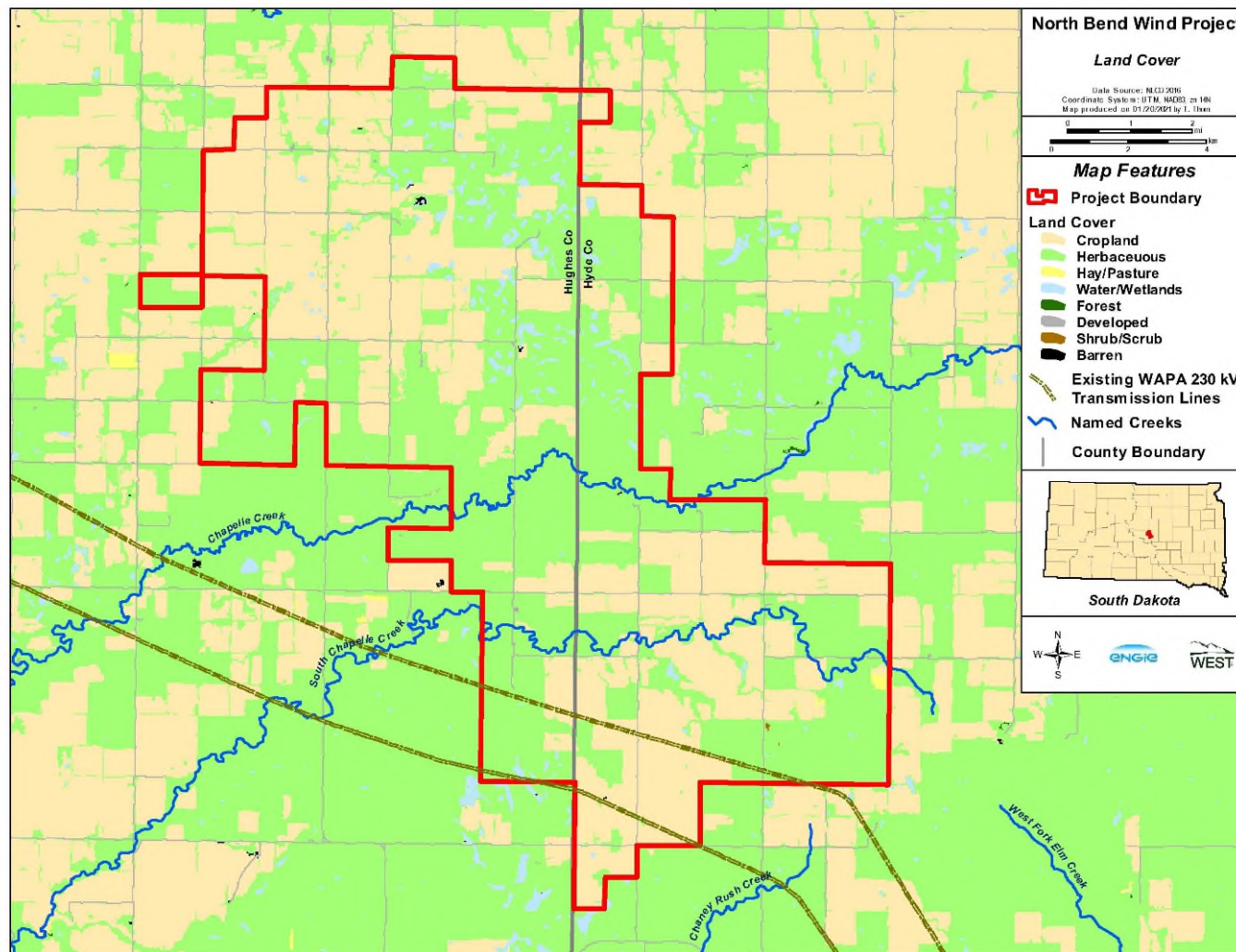
Acoustic Surveys of Bat Activity

- First year of surveys were conducted from May 26 – October 21, 2016.
- The second year of surveys were conducted from April 25 – October 25, 2018.

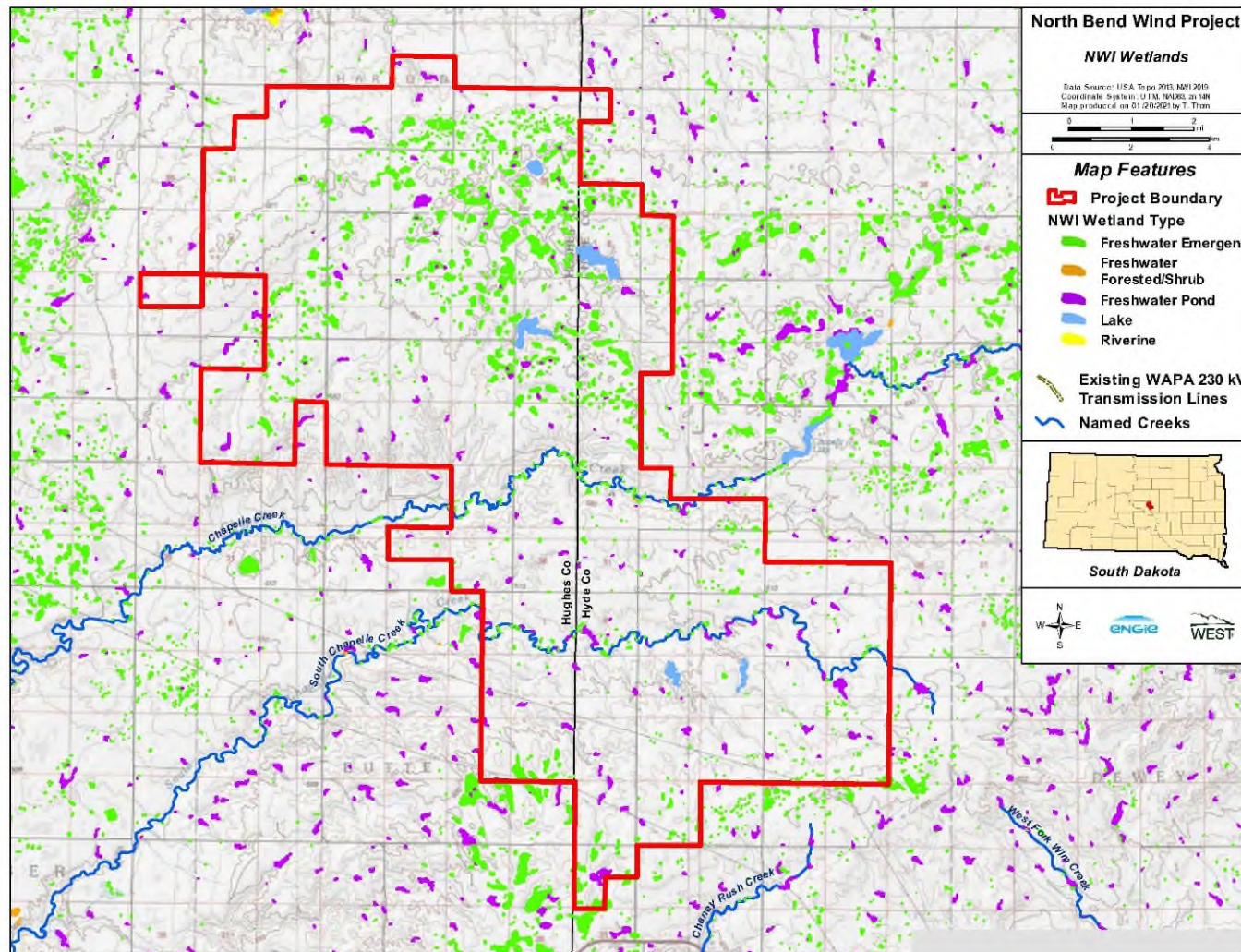
Northern Long-eared Bat Habitat Assessment

- A GIS habitat assessment was completed in 2017 for Northern Long-eared bat habitat.
- The 2017 assessment was updated in 2020 based on the newest guidance from FWS.

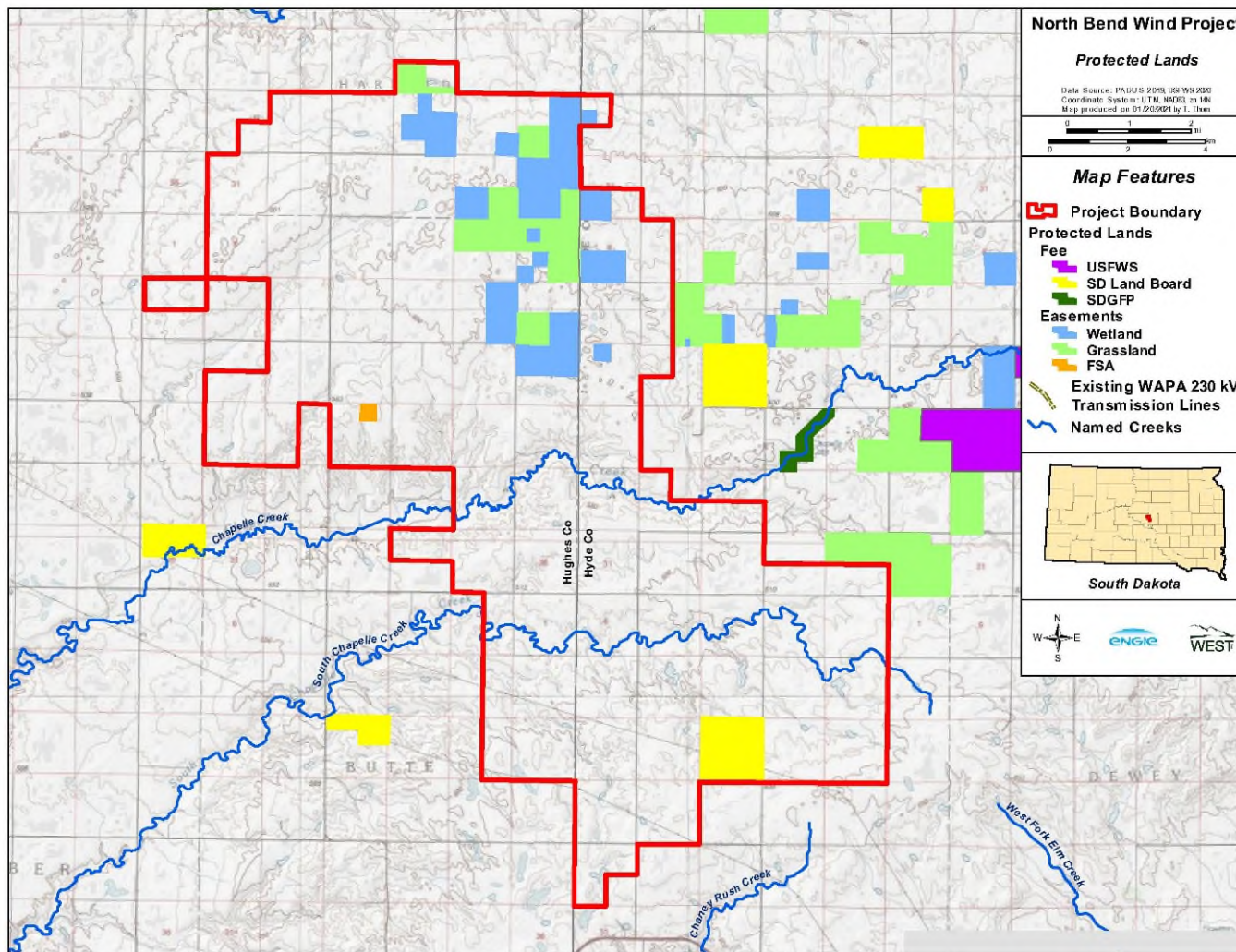
Land Cover in the Project Area



National Wetland Inventory Wetlands



Protected Lands Within and Near the Project Area



Additional Surveys

Cultural Resource Surveys

- Class III Archaeological Surveys were conducted
- Field work completed in Fall 2020
- Final report will be submitted to South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office

Tribal Consultation

- WAPA has initiated consultation
- 11 tribes were contacted: Apache Tribe of Oklahoma, Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes, Crow Creek Sioux Tribe, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, Fort Belknap Indian Community, Lower Brule Sioux Tribe, Oglala Sioux Tribe, Rosebud Sioux Tribe, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Santee Sioux Tribe of Nebraska, Yankton Sioux Tribe

QUESTIONS?



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